

Ladies, it's no surprise that if we live with fear and worry we will end up living with depression and maybe even despair. So it's important that we understand how to avoid living with fear and worry. With that in mind, let's first go over some of the key points that we have studied so far. We want to be sure that what we have learned is settled in our mind and heart. We'll review some of the key points from lessons 1-3: "What is the Source of our Hope?", "Living with Fear", and "Living with Worry".

First, in Lesson One we studied the source of our hope which is Jesus. Next, in lessons two and three, we studied fear and worry; which are two big distractions to living with hope.

1. In our first lesson we began by identifying the source of hope and why we can always count on this Source. **Jesus Christ IS our hope:** "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope" (1Timothy 1:1).

Let's recall just a few key things about our Hope...

- A. **We can trust in God** because He cannot lie: "In the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began (Titus 1:2).
- B. **It is a blessing to trust in the LORD:** "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

- C. Our Hope, which is **Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and arose again**. This good news, the gospel of grace, gives us eternal life and peace with God:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1Corinthians 15:1-4).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

- D. **God gives us comfort and encouragement:** "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word" (Psalm 119:114).
- E. **God gives us hope for each day:** "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). The rapture could happen at any time! At the rapture we will be reunited with our saved loved ones who have passed on before us. Then we will receive glorious bodies fit for heaven. AND we will escape God's wrath upon the earth during the prophesied seven year tribulation period.

2. Next, in lessons two and three we studied **fear and worry** and we saw how they are **closely related**. The words "fear" and "worry" are often used interchangeably; although there are differences. First, some key points about fear:

There are **two types** of fear: fear that is good for us and fear that is bad for us.

- A. The **fear that is good for us** leads us to have reverence for God and also leads us to be concerned about the future of our soul. Also, God has given us the ability to fear those situations that are real such as a being inside a burning building or speeding car. In these cases we need to take action so we won't be hurt.
- B. The **fear that is not good for us** happens when we respond to other types of fearful situations by leaving God out of solving the problem. Instead we attempt to resolve what we are afraid of in our own strength. When we do this we are not trusting God to solve the problem. In the end this causes us harm.
- C. **Worry is a less intense** emotion than fear. Worry accompanies a dread of something such as a dental appointment, being ready for company coming to visit, or taking a test. You keep replaying things over in your mind and fretting about it. You tend to think of all the bad outcomes. This is worry.
 - a. You won't be worried of something unless you're afraid, to some degree, of something happening or not happening. In that way a fear can lead to worry. This is how fear is connected to worry.
 - b. **Worry happens** in the way you respond to the fearful situation/problem:
 1. Do you take your problem to God first? Then, do you trust in God, trust in His will, and then let it **rest in His hands**? If it comes to your mind later do you give it back to God's will again? If you do this you are not worrying.
 2. Or do you **replay it over and over** thinking of all the bad scenarios while you fret about it? If you do this then you are worrying.
- D. You are **not worrying** when you are simply thinking things through in order to make a decision or to be prepared. When you are in doubt if you are worrying, or simply making plans, pray about it. God will show you.
- E. The **key** distinction between fear and worry is:
 - a. **Fear** is in response to a situation that is real and most **likely will happen** such as staying in a burning building or speeding car. You will take action to avoid harm.
 - b. **Worry** tends to be your response to a situation that **MAY happen** such as your dental appointment not going well, your company arrives early, or you fail the test. Worry is when we fret about a situation that MAY happen.

We need to be prepared to respond biblically so we will avoid fear and worry...

- F. **Our "plan"** when we start to fear and worry is based upon Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be

made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus".

Our "plan" when we start to worry:

1. **Say "No"** to fear and worry: "Be careful for nothing..."
2. **Ask God** for what we need: "but in every thing **by prayer** and supplication...let your requests be made known unto God..."
3. **Be thankful**: "...with thanksgiving..." as you take your needs to God **thank Him** for those things He has already done for you.
4. **Trust God and let it go**: You've taken your worry to the Lord, **now rest** knowing that God will handle it in His way and in His timing. His will is always best. "...And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus".

- G. The **biblical response** to fear and worry is to apply God's word with prayer and trust in His will. Remember, this type of fear comes from the devil who wants to distract you from trusting in God and His will for you.

Remember, Fear, and its companion worry, exist because we live in a fallen world ...If fear and worry are not dealt with biblically we will become depressed and possibly be in despair...

3. We have all **experienced** living with despair and depression at times during our life. However, we may not use the word "despair" to describe how we feel. Being in despair is the exact opposite from living with hope.
 - A. The KJV dictionary defines **despair** as being **hopeless**, even a loss of hope in the mercy of God and in life. Paul uses the word despair:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair"
(2Corinthians 4:8).

 - a. Paul was saying that in spite of all the troubles he encountered everywhere he went he did not give up hope. We should **never give up hope** either no matter what our circumstance.
 - B. Being in despair and being depressed are **closely related**. We can be mildly depressed where we still have hope but we're just worn out and can only see what is wrong. Or we can be severely depressed where we no longer have hope and everything looks dismal.

Our example of despair and depression from scripture that we studied was Elijah the prophet of God...

4. **Elijah** was God's prophet during the reign of the evil King Ahab and his evil Queen, Jezebel.
 - A. Elijah became **depressed** because he thought he was the only remaining who believed in God and followed God's covenant. He was depressed because the **children of Israel** had torn down God's altars. Then he became despaired when Queen Jezebel sent word to him that she was going to kill him.

Let's review 1Kings chapter 18 to understand the victory over the prophets of Baal that Elijah had experienced. This will give us the context for Elijah's despair and depression which follows in chapter 19.

Summary of 1Kings chapter 18

5. Elijah **challenged** the evil king Ahab of Israel, who followed after Baal, **to a showdown** at mount Carmel between the prophets of Baal and Elijah, the true prophet of God.
 - A. When the **people gathered** for the showdown Elijah spoke to them and asked them to make a decision on who they think is the true God.
 - a. "How long halt ye between **two opinions**? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal follow him" (1Kings 18:21). The people gathered and said nothing at this point.
 - b. **Elijah** told them that he is the only remaining prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets number 450 men.
 - B. The **plan** for this face off
 - a. **Elijah** and the **prophets of Baal** would each take one bullock and cut it into pieces, lay it on wood but put no fire under it.
 - b. The prophets of Baal would then call on the name of their god and Elijah would call on the name of the LORD and the God that **answered by fire** then he is THE true God.
 - c. The people liked this plan.
 - C. The **face off**
 - a. The **prophets of Baal went first**. They called on Baal **shouting loudly** and jumping upon the altar piercing themselves with knives until their blood gushed out. They did this way past midday until evening. Elijah made fun of them saying their god must be talking or on a trip. When **their god did not** respond Elijah then asked the people to watch him.
 - b. **Elijah went next**. Elijah took 12 stones (representing the tribes of the sons of Jacob) and he repaired the broken down altar of the LORD.
 - c. Next, Elijah made **a trench** around the altar. He then placed the wood on the altar and laid the cut-up pieces of the bullock on it. Then he had the people totally drench the altar with **water** and fill the trench around the altar with water.
 - d. Then without any yelling, jumping or piercing himself **Elijah simply went near the altar** and said: "...LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again" (1Kings 18:36-37).
 - e. Then **fire fell and consumed Elijah's sacrifice**, the wood, the stones, even the dust and all the water that was in the trench. When the people saw it they fell on their faces and proclaimed that the LORD is the God.
 - f. Elijah then told them to **round up** all of the prophets of Baal and when they did Elijah killed them all.
 - D. Elijah went to the top of mount Carmel and **prayed for rain** to end the 3 year drought. After this the LORD brought rain to the land.

Our Observation: *Elijah had just experienced seeing the power of God defeating the prophets of Baal; however, Elijah's hope soon turned into despair and depression as we will see in Chapter 19:1-18*

Summary of 1Kings 19: 1-7

6. **Queen Jezebel** response to Elijah's defeat of the prophets of Baal
 - A. Immediately, evil queen Jezebel **sent word to Elijah** that she knew he had killed all the prophets. And she had made a vow to the gods that she would kill Elijah by tomorrow AND if she wasn't successful the gods should kill her.

7. **Elijah's response** to Queen Jezebel's threat on his life
 - A. Elijah was **afraid** when he heard this and **lost hope**, so he **ran for his life** to Beersheba and went a day's journey into the wilderness. There he found a juniper tree, sat down underneath it and asked the LORD that he take his life right now. He had had enough. He had lost hope and was depressed. He then prayed to the LORD.

"...It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers"
(1Kings 19:4).

 - a. Then Elijah fell asleep under the tree. He was **in despair** and simply had no motivation to do anything. He laid down, waited to die, and fell asleep.

 - B. At Elijah's lowest point of despair the LORD renewed him.
 - a. God sent an **angel two times** to comfort him and provide for his physical needs of food and water. Each time the angel told Elijah to get up and eat and drink. In between those times Elijah laid back down and slept. The second time the angel told Elijah that he needed to get up and eat because he had **big journey** ahead of him. This journey was for forty days and forty nights and it would take him to **Horeb the mount of God**. We also know it as Mount Sinai where the LORD gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

Our Observation: *Elijah had experienced a **great victory for God** over the prophets of Baal. Yet right after this he forgot what God had just done and became so fearful for his life that he ran. How often do we forget about the great things God has done in our lives the minute we encounter a problem?*

Summary of 1Kings 19: 9-14

8. After his **40 day** journey Elijah arrived at Horeb the mount of God, found a cave and stayed in it.
 - A. The **LORD asked him** why he was there. This is the first time the LORD asks Elijah this question. What the LORD is really communicating to Elijah is "why are you in this depressed condition Elijah?"

 - B. **Elijah's response** to the LORD
"And he said, I Have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1Kings 19:10).

Our Observation: *We know that Elijah was in despair because he had **ran into a cave fearing for his life**, yet wanting God to take it. He told God in spite of how he stood firm for Him it hadn't done any good because he was the only prophet of God left. All the others had been killed and now those same people were trying to kill him as well. He wanted to give up. Elijah was overwhelmed with fear as he sat in the cave. He felt all alone in his devotion for the LORD. Elijah was overwhelmed with fear as he sat in the cave. He felt all alone in his devotion for the LORD. Yet God had seven thousand believers that Elijah didn't know about.*

9. The **LORD teaches Elijah** how to listen to God.
 - A. The LORD uses His power **over nature** to demonstrate to Elijah that we hear God more clearly in our hearts when we are still and quiet and not in the midst of confusion and drama.
 - a. The LORD told Elijah to leave the cave and go out and stand upon the mount.
 - b. Then the LORD passed by and brought: a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire. But the LORD was not in any of them.
 - c. **Then a still small voice came to Elijah** as he stood on the mount in front of the cave and God asked him why he was there. The LORD had already asked Elijah this same question in 1Kings 19:9. Of course, God knew why Elijah was present in the cave on mount Horeb because He had sent him there. What God was again communicating to Elijah was the same thing he was communicating to him in verse 9: "Why are you in this depressed condition Elijah?"
 - d. **Elijah again** told the LORD that he had stood firm for the LORD God of hosts; even though the children of Israel had forsaken God's covenant, destroyed God's altars, and killed God's prophets. Furthermore, I am the only prophet of God left and they are trying to kill me too.
 - B. Elijah is **stuck** in a pattern of despair and depression because he gives the same response to the LORD. (See 1Kings 18:22; 1Kings 19:4; 1Kings 19:10; 1Kings 19:14). We will see how the LORD lifts him from this condition. We will consider two observations first however...

Our First Observation: *When things are **still and peaceful** is when we are the most focused upon God. It is then that we grasp the work of the Holy Spirit within us who will show us in our heart and mind what we need to know.*

- When we are troubled we go to be by ourselves because we are **overwhelmed** with life. When we are alone we are not distracted by the world or people in it.
- We pray and pour out our heart to God and God responds with that **still voice** within our heart and mind. It is at those times that we feel the presence of the Lord within us and we are reassured that we are not alone and that we are loved.
- **God the Holy Spirit** then brings godly principles and scriptures to our mind and heart giving us direction and this renews our hope and lift us out of despair/depression. After our alone-in-prayer time with God our spirit is renewed.
- **This is how God works** when we seek Him for help. It is that still voice of God we hear when we are alone and seeking Him and His wisdom for us.

"Be still and know I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth"
(Psalm 46:10)

Our Second Observation: Our alone-in-prayer time with God is step 2 of our plan when we are faced with despair and depression is the same as when we face fear and worry. We apply this same plan when we face despair and depression because **despair and depression are the fruit of fear and worry**. Recall our plan based upon Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". This is a summary of our plan from Lesson Three "Living with Worry". Step #1: Say "No" to fear, worry, despair, depression. Step #2: Ask God for what you need. Step #3: Thank God for what He has already given you. Step #4: Trust God and let it go. Then receive the peace God will give you.

Summary of 1Kings 19: 15-18

10. The LORD gave **Elijah a new assignment**, which will replace Elijah's dismal thoughts with good things. This would benefit Elijah because it will take his mind off his depression and onto something else God had for Him. And Elijah would need to leave the cave where he sat depressed and go outside to serve the LORD with his new assignment.
- The LORD told Elijah to go to the wilderness of Damascus and **anoint two kings:** a king over Syria and a king over Israel.
 - The LORD also told Elijah to **anoint Elisha** to be a prophet who will take his place. This would also be a comfort for Elijah.
 - The LORD told Elijah that He had **7,000 people** in Israel who do not worship Baal. What a comfort and joy this would have been for Elijah to hear! Elijah was not alone.

Our Observation: *Sometimes when we are depressed just finding something **wholesome to do** will take our minds off our depression. We need to get out of our "cave" and be distracted from our cycle of fear and worry which has led us into our state of despair or depression. This may allow us to see something good that we couldn't see because we were depressed.*

11. Other **Scriptures to direct** and comfort us when we are in despair or in depression
- When we are depressed it will be good remember that our **God is always at work** not only in our life, but in the lives of others as well. There are things going on that we know nothing about. Things that may one day cast a whole **new light** on our problem. **Nothing is ever hopeless with God**. Just like the way Elijah kept thinking that he was the only prophet/believer left yet God had seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to Baal.
 - When we **remember this** and consider it we will **break the cycle of fear and worry**. In addition to following "**our plan**" from Philippians 4:6-7 we will go to other scriptures that will add to our understanding of addressing despair and depression.
 - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).
 - Sometimes our problems seem **so big** and we feel as though no one else has the same difficulties that we have. While 1Corinthians 10:13 is addressing how we face the

- temptation of sin in our lives, there is also a principle we can apply for when we face despair and depression.
- b. We are **not alone** in those things that cause us despair and depression. Just as sinful temptations are common to man so is despair or depression. There **isn't something strange** about you that no one else experiences. Remember Elijah whom we just studied.
 - c. Just as **God is faithful** to provide a way out when you experiencing a temptation **God** will also help you from being **overwhelmed** with despair or depression. He will provide a way out. **Begin by applying** the 4 steps of "our plan" from Philippians 4:6-7: Say no to despair or depression, pray and ask God for what you need, thank God for what He has already given you, then trust God and let it go. Receive His peace and relief from depression. The key is to keep your focus on Jesus and trust in Him.
- C. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).
- a. When you have been rejected or betrayed by someone, perhaps even someone you love, remember **you are always accepted** in the Beloved; in the Body of Christ. Always and forever. This also means God will never reject or betray you because he does not lie nor does he change. One day in heaven we will all receive true acceptance in a way we cannot experience on earth because of sin.
- D. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).
- a. God the **Holy Spirit** who dwells within me will turn my **mixed up thoughts** of despair and depression into a pray that is in line with the **will of God** for my life. The Holy Spirit searches my heart so I know that He will convey my innermost sorrows and needs.
- E. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).
- a. I know that whatever happens God will **use it for my good**. It may not make any sense to me yet I can be certain that God will use something from it for my good. I must remember that God is continually working in my life to make me more like His Son so I will need to get rid of some old ungodly habits and acquire new godly habits. God may be using something in the situation for those changes.
- F. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

- a. You are a **work in progress** because you are in Christ. You need to leave your past behind with all its sin and failures. Instead you need to focus on the truth which is you are accepted in the beloved and your past is not held against you. All your sin has been taken care of by Jesus and his death, burial, and resurrection. Because you have believed by faith in His finished work on the cross you have peace with God. Don't let your past be a distraction to your new life in Christ.
- b. The expression "**press on**" carries with it the idea of applying yourself and overcoming obstacles in your Christian walk. You will **purpose in your heart** to live for Christ and seek God's will daily. This gives you direction and purpose in life.

G. Philippians 4:4-7. This scripture is "our plan" when we first begin to be fearful, worry, despair, or become depressed; however, there is still more in it that will help us!

1. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

In the midst of your problems and sorrows you can have the peace of God. You rejoice that no matter what happens you have Christ. No matter what, you can find joy in your salvation and the security of your future in Christ.

2. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5).

In the midst of your problems and sorrows you can stay calm because you have the peace of God. God the Holy Spirit dwells within you so God is always "at hand". You are never truly alone.

3. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

You never need to be afraid or worry because God is in control. Whatever happens was filtered through Him and He has allowed it for His purpose. You immediately take your troubles and needs to God in prayer. And you thank Him for his goodness and all that He has already given you.

4. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

You can always **find joy** in the **midst of your circumstance** just because you are in Christ. You can rejoice because all your **sins are forgiven**, your **salvation is secure** and you have **peace with God**. You can **remain calm** in the midst of the storms in your life because you know God is with you. God the Holy Spirit dwells within in because you are in Christ. You are never alone. You never need to be afraid or worry about your problems because you have poured out your heart to the Lord in prayer. Now you rest knowing that your problem will be solved according to His will and in His timing, which is always best. When you handle your problems and the storms in your life this way you will have God's peace – you will not feel alone, you will feel His love, you won't be frantic but you will be calm because you are placing your trust in Him completely. You will be a **good testimony** to a lost world and bring glory to God. The God of the Universe will handle your problem for you according to His perfect will.

- H. The **counsel** found in Philippians 4: 8-9, 11-13 helps avoid despair and depression.
- When we **fill our minds** with troubling and depressing thoughts then we will end up being troubled and depressed.
 - We make ourselves **vulnerable to depression** when we are discontented with what we have in life, such as our material possessions or relationships.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you....Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:8-9, 11-13).

Steps to follow this passage of Scripture:

- Let **wholesome** things **dominate** your thinking.
 - Purpose** in your mind to actually **DO** what you know is according to scripture. Follow the example of our apostle Paul.
 - Learn to **be content** with what God has given you in your life. This is a process of realizing what you have is from God. Stop focusing on what you don't have; instead focus on what you have.
 - Know that your strength comes for Christ and **God will always** give you the strength to do His will.
12. Let's close our lesson on despair and depression by reminding ourselves **how much God loves us!**
- "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities" (Psalm 31:7)
 - "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).
 - "This I recall to my mind, there have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:21-23).
 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).
 - "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8: 38-39).
 - "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10).